

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 07538

EXDIS

(C O R R E C T E D C O P Y) -TEXT PARA 1-

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, FR, UK, US, BW, GW
SUBJECT: FRENCH CONCERNED ABOUT UK VIEWS ON BERLIN

REF: BONN 3884

1. QUAI'S DIRECTOR CENTRAL EUROPEAN AFFAIRS PLAISANT
TELLS US THAT QUAI REMAINS "VERY WORRIED" BY HIBBERTS
"QUIRKISH" VIEWS ON BERLIN, EVEN THOUGH FRENCH HAD
COMPROMISED "THIS TIME" ON FORMULATIONS IN DRAFT REPLY
TO SOVIET PROTEST OF NOVEMBER 16 ON BERLIN AND THE
EC.

2. ESSENTIALLY, PLAISANT SUSPECTS THAT HIBBERT'S
RESISTANCE TO FURTHER USE OF TIME-HONORED REFERENCES
TO "QUADRIPARTITE STATUS OF BERLIN" IS PRELUDE TO
NEW BERLIN DEAL WHICH HE MAY HAVE IN MIND; IN WHICH
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WEST WOULD IN END ACCEPT SOVIET FORMULATION THAT ONLY
WEST BERLIN HAD "SPECIAL STATUS," AS KVITSINSKI PUT
IT IN SOVIET REPLY TO JANUARY 11 PROTEST; IN RETURN
FOR SOVIET AND GDR ACCEPTANCE OF UNCHALLENGED WEST
BERLIN PARTICIPATION IN EC AND BILATERAL REPRESENTA-
TION ABROAD BY FRG, ETC.

3. PLAISANT SAYS FRENCH CONTINUE TO THINK THAT ANY SUCH SCHEME WOULD REST ON TWO PROFOUND ILLUSIONS:

FIRST, THAT IT WOULD NOT REMOVE ESSENTIAL SOVIETS LEVERAGE OVER BERLIN, I.E., THEIR ABILITY TO INTERFERE WITH ACCESS. SITUATION, PLAISANT SAID, WOULD BE DIFFERENT IF BERLIN IN FACT LAY ON THE FRG-GDR BORDER. AS IT IS, HOWEVER, EAST WOULD SIMPLY POCKET "HIBBERT'S" CONCESSION AS A FURTHER "REALISTIC" RECOGNITION OF THE STATE OF AFFAIRS, AND WOULD THEN GO ON TO THE NEXT SLICE OF THE SALAMI.

SECONDLY, SUCH AN APPROACH WOULD OVERLOOK FACT THAT, LEGALLY, WESTERN POSITION IN WEST BERLIN ALSO RESTS ON SAME QUADRIPARTITE STATUS OF BERLIN. ANY DIMINUTION OF THAT STATUS IN EAST BERLINE THEREFORE COULD "PARI PASSU," ONLY FURTHER DIMINISH LEGAL POSITION IN WEST BERLIN AS WELL.

4. COMMENT: PLAISANT DID NOT REPEAT NOT EXPLAIN ON WHAT GROUNDS HE BASED THESE SUSPICIONS, FOR EXAMPLE, WHETHER OR NOT HE IS PRIVY TO THE "HIBBERT LETTER." WE ARE THEREFORE UNABLE TO COMMENT TO WHAT EXTENT HIS BROACHING THIS QUESTION WITH US IS FRENCH TACTIC OR REPRESENTS REAL CONCERN BASED ON KNOWLEDGE HIBBERT'S THINKING. HE ONLY VOLUNTEERED THAT, DURING FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN'S RECENT VISIT HERE, DE GUIRINGAUD TOOK UP THESE ISSUES WITH HIM, BUT THAT OWEN HAS NOT SUFFICIENTLY BRIEFED TO GIVE MEANINGFUL ANSWER.
GAMMON

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